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ABSTRACT

While many authorities apparently agree that international education can make a significant contribution toward furthering world understanding, there also seems to be agreement that some negative aspects of such programs exist. The authors of this paper believe that the non-academic aspects of international education are quite frequently the factors that contribute most significantly to the success or failure of a venture from an academic standpoint. Consequently, it was felt that a report of the experiences of a developing university in exploring international education might be worthwhile. It is stated that non-academic counseling has proved to be essential if an institution is to achieve the desired goals from foreign programs. In addition, it is emphasized that the non-academic aspects of foreign travel loom so large that it might almost be stated that a program of international education is doomed to failure from the start if considerable emphasis is not placed upon the non-academic aspects of counseling. Three cases of actual experiences taken from a travel study program abroad by the senior author are presented. (Author)

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SOME NON-ACADEMIC ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

by

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While many authorities apparently agree that international education can make a significant contribution toward furthering world understanding³ there also seems to be agreement that some negative aspects of such programs exist. As Dr. Arnold Anderson puts it, "To send thousands of immature undergraduates abroad, knowing that few take the opportunities seriously, is to flaunt our affluence and to atrophy the welcome to American scholars and advanced students. It is part of the same process as inflating our enrollments in substandard post-secondary schooling. Such programs compared to

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³McCann, Carolyn, "Major Issues in Advising Foreign Students - A Review." Published in College Student Personnel, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1970; p. 364.

CG 007 442

the alternative use of the resources, fritter funds, bring little intimate intercultural experience, and add little to our intellectual capital."¹

It does seem to be a truism that there is no substitute for experience. And, just as the student profits from the experience of overseas travel, so does the educator who accompanies those students or the administrator who makes the arrangements for the foreign travel. The authors of this paper have recently been involved in such planning. It became increasingly evident that the non-academic aspects of international education were quite frequently the factors that contributed most significantly to the success or failure of the venture from an academic standpoint. Consequently, it was felt that a report of the experiences of a developing university in exploring international education might be worthwhile.

The senior author has traveled extensively and had the experience of accompanying a group of students on World Campus Afloat. The responsibility of serving as Dean of Students in the spring of 1970 on board a ship which touched many foreign ports served as valuable experience for accompanying a group to Angers, France, during the summer of 1971. Present planning is to develop a program in Hong Kong for the summer of 1972.

Non-academic counseling has proved to be essential if an institution is to achieve the desired goals from foreign programs. For example, the emotional stability of an American student planning a foreign tour might be of considerably more importance to his successful educational experience than his academic capabilities. One example of the non-academic problems with which educators must cope, is the current situation as regards illicit drugs. The drug culture alone makes significant additional demands

¹Anderson, Arnold. "Challenges and Pitfalls in International Education," The U. S. and International Education. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1969; p. 71.

upon non-academic counseling. Indeed, the non-academic aspects of foreign travel loom so large that it might almost be stated that a program of international education is doomed to failure from the start if considerable emphasis is not placed upon the non-academic aspects of counseling. Consequently, in developing programs of foreign travel at Northeast Louisiana University it has been found helpful to devise checklists to be completed by students both prior to and upon consummating a foreign tour. Nothing unique or sacrosanct is implied in these checklists. In fact, it would seem desirable that an institution develop its own checklists to fit individual needs. However, some form of structured responses can be quite useful in assisting students to obtain maximum benefit from prospective foreign travel. In some cases such travel might profitably be postponed until greater maturity is reached by the student. The checklists themselves are deliberately over-simplified. Their purpose is simply to furnish an opening for an in-depth interview with the students on a one-to-one basis with a non-academic counselor.

The following cases are actual experiences taken from a travel study program abroad by the senior author.

Case "A". Tom was a young man twenty years of age and a sophomore in college. He was in a travel study program for one semester. Tom's father was a very successful medical doctor in the United States. Tom earnestly desired to go to medical school. However, he was so anxiety-ridden that it was difficult to relax enough to take examinations successfully. There was some question as to whether he possessed the mental ability to become a medical doctor. From the practical standpoint, Tom could speak

knowledgeably about medicine because of the many hours he had spent with his father in hospitals, including the operating room. Foreign travel proved very beneficial in Tom's case. He began to acquire much more self-confidence as a result of the personal attention given him by his professors. Because of the method of conducting the academic program in this particular foreign travel experience he had the opportunity to take some tests orally. This successful experience continued to bolster Tom's confidence. He began on his own volition to investigate other areas of medicine which did not require as much intellectual specialization as the M.D. program. He became quite interested in visiting hospitals around the world.

Case "A" is an example of a positive result of international education upon a particular individual. Case "B" represents a different type.

Case "B". Ann was a female sophomore, nineteen years old, from the southern part of the United States. She had always been very sheltered and protected by both family and friends. During her travel study program perhaps for the first time in her life Ann acquired an awareness of other people and of the world around her. After approximately one month of a five-month program Ann desired to return home. She felt that the exposure to so much so fast was more than she could cope with. After counseling, however, she decided to continue the program. She had enrolled initially at the insistence of her parents. However, it was not until after she was out of the United States that she began to believe that the experiences of foreign travel were too much for her.

Ann's difficulties continued after she returned to the South. She became bored and frustrated. In short, Ann experienced difficulties both in leaving and in re-entering

the environment that she had left prior to going abroad.

Case "C". Joe was a young man twenty-one years of age with the classification of junior in college. Joe was an adopted child, and the only child of a very affluent home. Joe had traveled extensively and had lived in a foreign country for some time with his parents. However, he developed a real problem relating to the various religious views that he experienced around the world, especially those of the far Eastern area. In addition, Joe was experiencing difficulty planning a career. As a junior, he needed to finalize degree plans for a successful future. Upon returning to the United States Joe avoided career planning and continued future travel plans.

The three cases presented are actual examples of individuals participating in foreign study programs. In one case the individual definitely profited from the experience. However, perhaps additional non-academic counseling could have assured even greater profit from the foreign study. In the other two cases, counseling could have definitely eliminated some of the problems relating to religion, and, for Case "B", might perhaps have indicated that foreign travel might better have been postponed until the individual became more mature.

In preparing for foreign travel the following proposed guidelines may be of some benefit in the area of non-academic counseling for the American student going abroad.

- I. Have the student planning to go abroad fill out the checklists as presented in Appendix "A".
- II. Go over the checklist with the student responding to any questions that arise.
- III. Discuss particularly Item 6 to ascertain the best travel study program for that individual student.

IV. Consider the age, classification, and course of study with respect to the optimum time for a student to be absent from academic pursuits on his home campus.

V. Discuss financial sacrifices that the student might be making in regard to his time abroad.

VI. Review vocational and career plans that might be interrupted by being away from the home campus for six weeks to a year.

VII. Carefully review foreign issues and problems relative to race, color, and creed. These can become major issues in such areas as South Africa, Japan, Israel, and similar areas.

VIII. Health problems that might be a deterrent toward a successful tour abroad should be discussed.

IX. Emotional problems that might be aggravated by separation from secure surroundings and environment call for discouraging foreign travel until a later time. If indications are that such problems are of a relatively minor nature, occasionally in-depth preparation can assure a successful program. However, caution should be the keynote.

The returning student can profit similarly by completing the checklist as furnished in Appendix "B".

The foreign experience should be followed up by an opportunity for an in-depth discussion with a non-academic counselor.

APPENDIX A

CHECK LIST FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS PLANNING TO GO ABROAD

Name	Classification	
	YES	NO
1. Is this the first time you have traveled outside the United States?	_____	_____
2. Are you receiving any financial assistance to go abroad?	_____	_____
3. Can you truthfully say that the reason for your going on a travel study program is of your own desire and not that of family or friends?	_____	_____
4. Are you finding it difficult to leave your close friends and family to travel abroad?	_____	_____
5. Are you apprehensive in any way about health problems you might encounter while abroad?	_____	_____
6. Have you thought carefully about the particular travel study program from which you will benefit the most?	_____	_____
7. Are you in a particular degree plan in a college at this time?	_____	_____
8. At the present time are you relatively certain about your future career plans?	_____	_____
9. Do you have a relatively open mind to international issues and problems? (Such as race, religion, cultural differences.)	_____	_____
10. What questions of a non-academic nature do you have in regard to your travel plans?		

Additional comments: _____

APPENDIX B

CHECK LIST FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS RETURNING FROM ABROAD

Name	Classification		
		YES	NO
1.	Can you truthfully say that you had a very worthwhile experience while abroad?	_____	_____
2.	If you had the opportunity to travel abroad again, would you do so?	_____	_____
3.	If you did obtain financial assistance to go abroad, do you think it was worth the investment?	_____	_____
4.	Do you feel now that you have returned from your travel study program abroad, that you would like to change your major course of study in college?	_____	_____
5.	Since returning from abroad, do you want to change your career plans from what they were prior to your leaving?	_____	_____
6.	Do you think that your relationship with your peer groups will be different from what they were before leaving the country?	_____	_____
7.	Will your outlook on international issues be broader as a result of your recent experience abroad?	_____	_____
8.	Was the caliber of the travel study program in which you were involved up to your expectations?	_____	_____
9.	Do you see where having traveled abroad can directly influence you in being a better American citizen?	_____	_____
10.	Prior to your having left the United States, what preparation would have been more beneficial?		

Additional comments: _____